

PLACES TO VISIT

The early Eltham settlers found a vibrant local community of Aboriginals. The following places can be easily reached once in Melbourne and allow us to ponder the lives of these first inhabitants.

Bolin Bolin Meeting Place

This is a billabong near the Yarra River in Bulleen, which was an area of great spiritual and cultural importance to the people of the Wurundjeri. Every year in April and May when the food was plentiful, they would meet there with four other tribes of the Kulin nation. This gathering created the opportunity for people to trade goods, arrange marriages and sort out differences. There would be story telling, dancing and the settling of grievances, such as trespass or wife stealing. It also created the opportunity for initiations and other ceremonies to take place. Imagine a span of time like the 40,000 years that is one of the more conservative estimates of how long indigenous people have been in this country.

Gawa Wurundjeri Resource Trail

The Gawa Wurundjeri Aboriginal Resource Trail is now open! The trail, near Watsons Creek on the Eltham-Yarra Glen Road provides a self-guided tour, with markers explaining how the Wurundjeri clan of about 50 people lived near the creek, and used the land to obtain bush foods, medicines, implements, shelter and clothes - all created by their Dreamtime spirits.

The clearly marked 340m-looped trail was made possible with a \$20,000 grant from the Natural Heritage Trust and the labour of the Green Corp volunteers. It is expected that the resource trail would help the community's understanding of Aboriginal culture and would also be widely used as a teaching aid.

Mick Woiwod has stated that "A lot of people wouldn't last very long out here, but the Wurundjeri people had quite a lot of food because they knew where to get it."